

Moving learners to action – April 15 and 16, 2010

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~ a quick 'road map' of some of the major concepts presented in the workshop ~

Why should we move learners to action? At its core, this workshop is about the support and development of **environmental citizens**, a conception that expands the concept of citizenship from a local, regional or even national construct to one that takes into account our duties, obligations and responsibilities to a wider environmental and social sphere. Action is a responsibility of citizenship, and needs to be encouraged.

Moving implies a change from the status quo, moving from a state of inaction to a state of action. **We will briefly look at the concepts of George Kelly's *Theory of Personal Constructs* to frame the idea of change.**

What are the methods available to us for making change., for moving learners? I will present **change concepts including that of Howard Gardners' *Changing Mind* work and Kurt Lewin's change theory and his method of 'force field analysis'.**

This workshop is concerned with action, and 'action' needs to be differentiated from 'activity'. While environmental education often keeps students busy, being busy is not the same as engaging in action. A discussion of action will grow out of the work of John Dewey's *Experience and Education*, and the work of other philosophers. **This conception of action will lead us to the approach of *action competence* as a primary method for environmental education.**

There are a variety of models that look at the emergence of environmentally responsible behaviors, including that of Hines, of Hungerford & Volk, and Hawthorne & Alabaster. While these models are not necessarily predictive, **they do point out attributes of environmentally responsible people**, people who exhibit environmental citizenship behaviors, and from those models we might be able to glean core ideas for our educational programming.

The 'action competence' approach to environmental education grows out of work done in the Nordic countries over the past decade and more. **"Developing action competence becomes a formative ideal in a democratic approach to education."** It is this model, more than the more behaviorally-oriented educational approaches developed primarily in the United States, that I think best-reflects our interests in helping to move learners to action.

Finally, we will look at the power of social norms in moving people to pro-environmental action. The establishment of norms in itself is a demonstration itself of the action competence of members of communities and of the potential of a community to act in ways that further their environmental citizenship actions. One method of ensuring those norms persist through time is via the establishment of ritual and tradition based on societal/community norms, and these can be established at a variety of scales, from the local school level to society at large.